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# *Overheard in a Garden*

Oliver Herford

*Oliver Herford*

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# OVERHEARD IN A GARDEN

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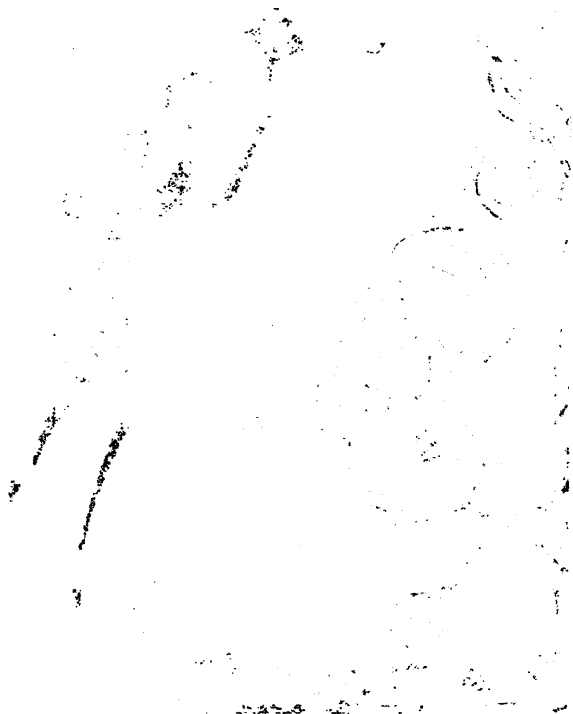
Overheard  
*In a Garden*  
*Et Cætera*

By  
Oliver Herford



*With Pictures*  
*By the Author*

NEW YORK · Published by  
Charles Scribner's Sons



# Overheard *In a Garden* *Et Coetera*

*By*  
**Oliver Herford**

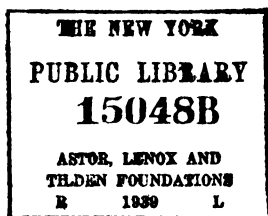


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2011





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I  
OVERHEARD  
*in a* GARDEN

***T**HE Bubble winked at me and said,  
"You'll miss me, brother, when you're  
dead."*



### TELL-TALE

**THE** Lily whispered to the Rose :

“ The Tulip ’s fearfully stuck up.  
You ’d think, to see the creature’s pose,  
She were a golden altar-cup.  
There ’s method in her boldness, too;  
She catches twice her share of Dew.”

1

1



The Rose into the Tulip's ear

Murmured: "The Lily is a sight;  
Don't you believe she *powders*, dear,  
To make herself so saintly white?  
She takes some trouble, it is plain,  
Her reputation to sustain."

Said Tulip to the Lily white:

"About the Rose — what do you think? —  
Her color? Should you say it's quite —  
Well, quite a natural shade of pink?"  
"Natural!" the Lily cried. "Good Saints!  
Why, *everybody* knows she paints!"





## GOSSIP

THE news around the garden flew :

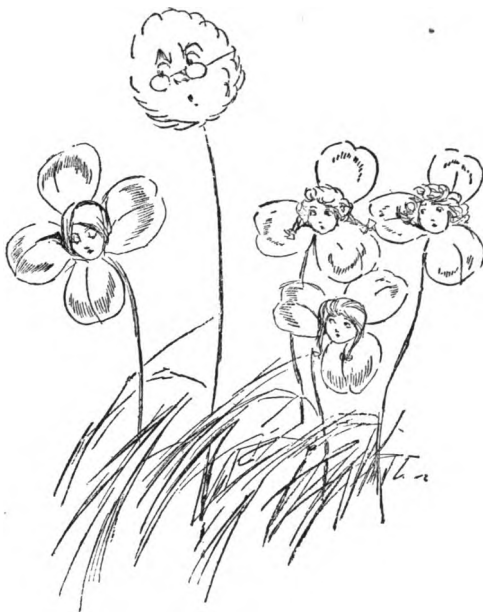
Last night the Rose was robbed — *A flower*  
*Was filched from her and flung into*  
*The casement of my Lady's bower.*

The flowers were mystified. In vain

They asked of one another, "*Pray,*  
*What ails our Lady of Disdain*  
*That she must wear a Rose to-day ?*"

The Daisy, with her latest breath,

'Reft of her petals, whispered low,  
"*It is a secret to the Death ;*  
*I gave my petals all to know.*"



### A HOPELESS CASE

HER sisters shunned her, half in fear  
And half in pity. " 'T is too bad  
She is not made as we — poor dear ! "  
(Four leaves instead of Three she had.)

Said Doctor Bee: " Her case is rare  
And due to Influence prenatal.  
To amputate I would not dare,  
The operation might be fatal.



“With Rest and Care and Simple Food  
She may outlive both you and me;  
A change of scene *might* do her good.”  
(One bag of Honey was his fee.)

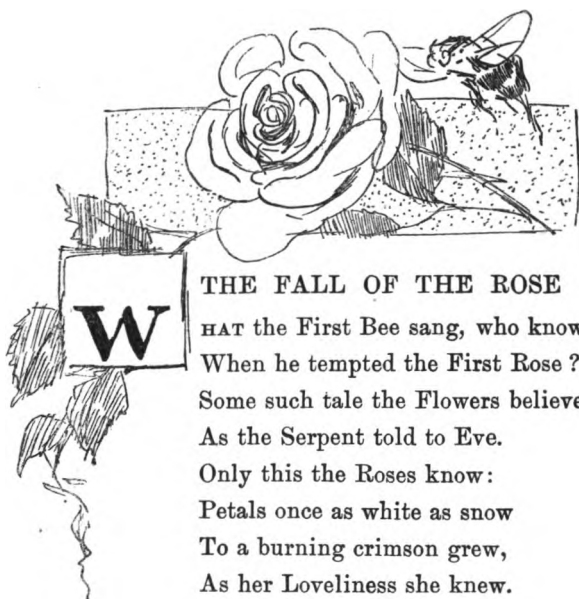
. . . . .

“Take me! take me!” the clovers cry,  
To a maid bending wistful-eyed.  
With gentle hand she puts them by,  
Till all but one are passed aside.

Before her sisters’ wondering eyes  
Her leaves with kisses are told over.  
“At last! at last!” the maiden cries,  
“I’ve found you, little four-leaved clover.”







### THE FALL OF THE ROSE

**W**HAT the First Bee sang, who knows  
When he tempted the First Rose ?  
Some such tale the Flowers believe,  
As the Serpent told to Eve.  
Only this the Roses know :  
Petals once as white as snow  
To a burning crimson grew,  
As her Loveliness she knew.  
**Then it was a leaf she took**  
**Out of Eve's own fashion-book ;**  
**And from Eden's mosses wove**  
**An apron chaste. In vain she strove,**  
**For in that veil of emerald lace**  
**The Moss Rose found an added grace.**



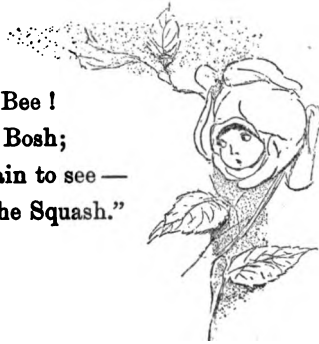
## SCANDAL

FOR all the Morning Glory's airs,  
She has the instincts of a Weed;  
To-day I caught her unawares  
Kissing a Squash — I did indeed.

"But don't repeat it," said the Rose,  
Then told the Pink, who told the Bee,  
Who said, "I'll see to it, it goes  
No farther." Then he told it me.



Said I, "It is a shame, O Bee !  
To circulate such arrant Bosh;  
And if it's true — it's plain to see —  
You're only jealous of the Squash."





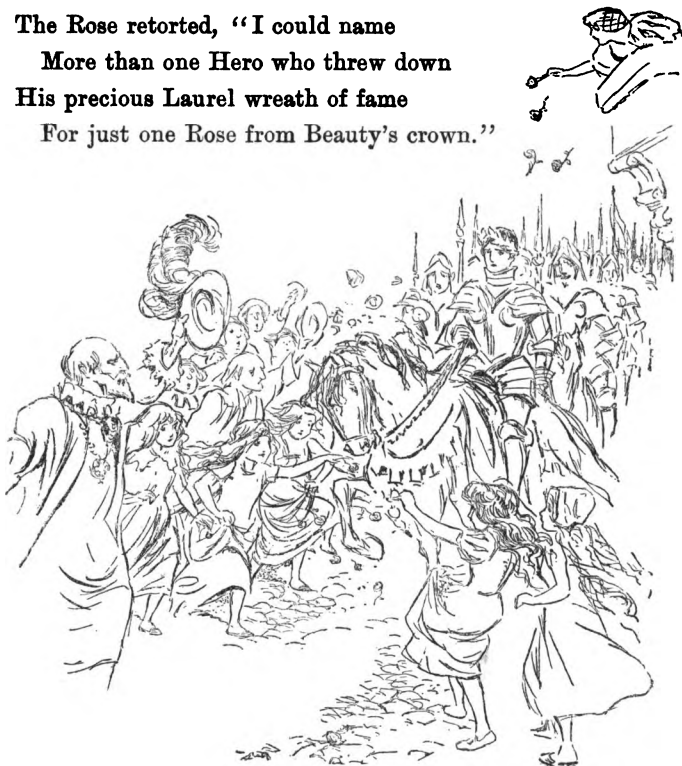


## THE QUARREL

THE Laurel started the affair,  
Calling the Rose a vain coquette.  
The Rose replied she did not care  
*What* people thought, outside her set.

“Faith, you speak true!” the Laurel cried,  
“Roses and Laurels only meet  
When on the Hero’s head we ride,  
And you are tossed beneath his feet.”

The Rose retorted, "I could name  
More than one Hero who threw down  
His precious Laurel wreath of fame  
For just one Rose from Beauty's crown."



The Laurel frowned, "'T is as you say,  
And yet it cannot be gainsaid,  
Their Laurels are undimmed to-day  
Save by the Folly of that trade."

"Your reasoning's false!" exclaimed the Rose,  
    "Your premises are falser yet;  
Your sentiment is all a pose!  
    Besides — you are not in my set!"

**MORAL**

'Twixt Duty, here below, and Love,  
    Alas! we see a great gulf fixed;  
Perhaps they're Introduced Above,  
    In Heaven, society is mixed.



## A BUTTERFLY OF FASHION

A **REAL** Butterfly, I mean,  
With Orange-pointed saffron wings  
And coat of inky Velveteen —  
None of your Fashion-plated Things

That dangle from the Apronstrings  
Of Mrs. Grundy — or you see  
Loll by the Stage Door or the Wings,  
Or sadly flit from Tea to Tea.

Not such a Butterfly was he;  
He lived for Sunshine and the Hour;  
He did not flit from Tea to Tea,  
But gayly flew from Flower to Flower.

One Day there came a Thunder Shower —  
An Open Window he espied.  
He fluttered in; behold, a Flower!  
An Azure Rose with petals wide.

He did not linger to decide  
*Which Flower*; there was no other there.  
He calmly settled down inside  
That Rose, and no one said "*Beware!*"

There was no Friend to say, "Take care!"  
How ever, then, could he suppose  
This Blossom, of such Color Rare,  
Was just an Artificial Rose?

All might have ended well — who knows? —  
But just then some one chanced to say:  
"*The very Latest Thing! That Rose*  
*In Paris is the Rage To-day.*"

No Rose of such a Tint *outré*  
Was ever seen in Garden Bed;  
The Butterfly had such a Gay,  
Chromatic Sense, it turned his head.

“*The Very Latest Thing?*” he said;  
“Long have I sighed for something New!  
O Roses Yellow, White, and Red,  
Let others sip; *mine shall be Blue!*”

The Flavor was not Nice, 't is true  
(He felt a Pain inside his Waist).  
“It is not well to overdo,”  
Said he, “a just-acquired taste.”

The Shower passed ; he joined in haste  
His friends. With condescension great,  
Said he, “I fear your time you waste;  
*Real Roses* are *quite* out of date.”

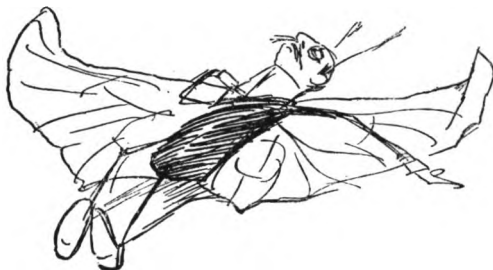
He argued early, argued late,  
Till what was erst a HARMLESS POSE  
Grew to a Fierce, Inordinate  
Craving for Artificial Rose.

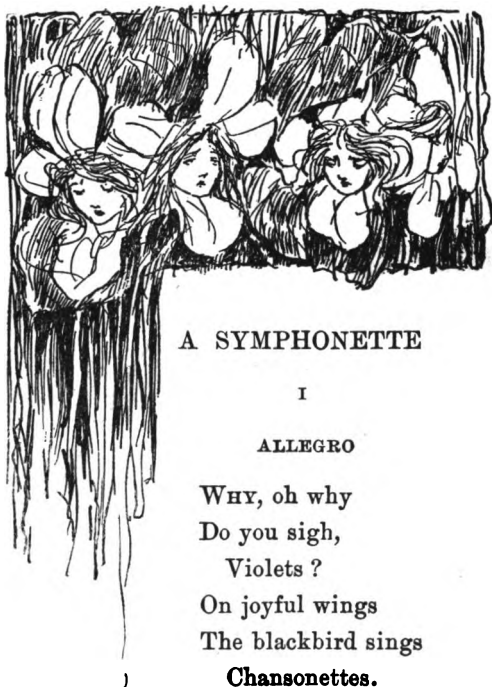
He haunted Garden Parties, Shows,  
Wherever Ladies Congregate,  
And in their Bonnets thrust his nose  
His Craving Fierce to Satiare.

At last he chanced, sad to relate,  
Into a Caterer's with his Pose,  
And there Pneumonia was his Fate  
From *sitting on an Ice Cream Rose*.

O Reader, shun the Harmless Pose.  
They buried him, with scant lament,  
Beneath a Common Brier-Rose,  
And wrote:

**HERE LIES A DECADENT.**





## A SYMPHONETTE

I

ALLEGRO

WHY, oh why  
Do you sigh,  
Violets ?  
On joyful wings  
The blackbird sings  
Chansonettes.  
Now spring is here,  
Old winter drear  
He forgets.

19



THE VIOLETS :

*He may sing,  
He can fly  
On his wing  
To the sky.  
We must stay,  
Live and die,  
Here alway,  
In this wood,  
Misunderstood.  
Oh to fly!  
We are nigh  
Sick to death  
Of the trees  
And the vines,  
And the breath  
Of the pines  
In the breeze.*

II

ALLEGRETTO

Change of scene.  
Gone the sad  
Woods of green.

Beneath the glad  
Electric sheen  
Of Broadway,  
Violets gay  
Take their way  
To the Play  
In a bouquet.

III

SCHERZO

Madcap Play,  
Merry strife,  
Chorus gay,  
Viol, fife.  
Hip, Hurray !  
This is life !

Fairy scene,  
Flash of gauze,  
Pink, now green,  
Wild applause —  
She comes ! The Queen !!

THE VIOLETS:

*Hark, she sings !  
Oh, ecstasy !  
Oh for wings !  
Oh to fly !  
For the bliss  
Of one kiss  
We could die !*

Breathless flight,  
Swift as light,  
Oh, rapturous night !  
They 'light, they rest,  
Tranquil, serene,  
Upon the breast  
Of the Elf Queen.



ADAGIO

THE VIOLETS:

*Tossed aside,  
None to care.  
Where, oh, where  
Shall we hide?*

Fitful glare,  
Deserted street,  
Blank despair!  
A sound of feet!

Oh, tired feet!  
Will they spurn?  
They retreat,  
They pause — they turn!

Face flower-pale,  
Clasp flower-frail,  
Kisses that burn  
And chill by turn.  
Eyes dim with pain.

VIOLETS:

*Whence that warm rain?*

#### INTERMEZZO

"Nay, tempt not Fate!  
'T is not too late!  
We die! But you  
May live anew.  
Ah, do not wait!  
'T is not too late  
Yet to retrace  
And turn aside,"  
The Violets cried,  
Close to her face.

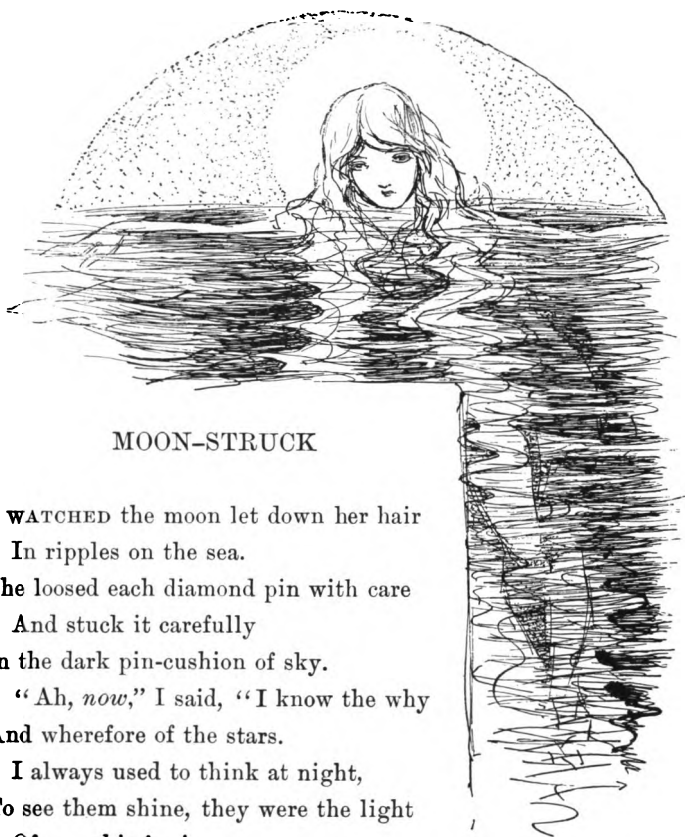
#### FINALE

Time has flown.  
In a glade  
Violet-strewn  
Sings a maid  
Soft and low.  
In the glade  
Where they grow,  
Bending so  
Very near,  
The Violets hear  
And they know.

## II

# NOT IN THE GARDEN





## MOON-STRUCK

**I** WATCHED the moon let down her hair  
In ripples on the sea.

**She** loosed each diamond pin with care  
And stuck it carefully

**In** the dark pin-cushion of sky.

“Ah, *now*,” I said, “I know the why  
**And** wherefore of the stars.

I always used to think at night,  
To see them shine, they were the light  
Of seraphim's cigars.

**Now I have learned, and none too soon,**  
**They are the Hairpins of the Moon.”**





## A CALENDAR OF DISCONTENT

### SPRING

Too well I know you, Spring, and so restrain  
My foolish muse from all such flatterings vain  
As "mild" and "gentle" — lest I be repaid,  
Even as Marsyas of old, and flayed,  
This time by icy hail and cutting sleet.  
Instead — I pray your going may be fleet,  
That soon I may forget and drowse away  
My weariness beneath Dear Summer's sway.



### SUMMER

INSUFFERABLE season of the Sun,  
When will your endless reign of fire be done ?  
When will your noisy insect court take flight ?  
Your orchestra that rests not, — day or night ;  
Your armies with unconquerable stings ;  
When will they flee — what for do they have  
wings ?  
How long before brave Autumn, with a shout,  
Will succor me and put them all to rout ?



#### AUTUMN

You dismal mourner, wailing by the bier  
Of Summer dead, with lamentations drear,  
Driving me frantic ever and anon,  
With reminiscences of Summer gone, —  
Now mimicking her tenderest airs and tones,  
Now harrowing me with horrid shrieks and  
groans, —  
Were good old jolly Winter only here,  
I'd soon forget you and your evil cheer !



#### WINTER

HOARY impostor ! with mock jovial air,  
You took the green earth prisoner unaware,  
And pinioned the trees that moan and call  
To Spring to free them from your icy thrall.  
You manacled the stream, who tugs in vain  
To loose himself from your relentless chain.  
And I — my heart is sad, my lyre is dumb;  
Mild, Gentle Spring, — oh! will you *ever* come!



## LÈSE MAJESTÉ

THE Lion ramps around the cage,  
The Lady smiles to see him rage.  
The little Mouse outside the bars  
Looks on and laughs. " Well, bless my stars ! "  
Quoth he, " to think they call that thing  
The *King of Beasts* ! If *he* 's a King,  
Who cannot make the Lady wince,  
What must *I* be ? When, not long since,  
Inside the cage I chanced to slip,  
You should have seen that Lady skip  
Upon the Lion's back. ' Help ! Murder !  
A Mouse ! ' she screamed ; you should have heard  
her !  
And then with brooms the keepers came  
And drove me out (but, all the same,  
I got the crumb that I was after).  
A King indeed ! Excuse my laughter ! "

## A DECADENT

REALITIES to Him are Cold and Stern.

He loves from Nature's Crudities to turn  
To the Sweet Unrealities of Art  
And all Her Tinkling Symbolism learn.

For Him there is no Rose at the Fleuriste  
Vies with the Rose of Crêpe of the Modiste  
And Paradise, without a Milliner  
He vows would be unutterably Triste.

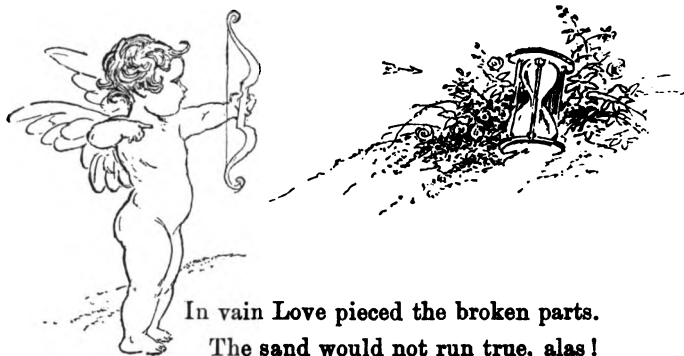


## LOVE AND TIME

Love stole Time's hour-glass one day  
    (It happened he was out of hearts),  
And set it up beside the way,  
    To be a target for his darts.

At length but one of all his quiver  
    Remained (some glanced and some fell wide);  
He shot the last — Time saw it shiver  
    His glass. "What have you done?" he cried.





In vain Love pieced the broken parts.  
The sand would not run true, alas !  
Cried Time: "Confound you and your  
darts !  
Now I must get another glass."

So ever since, to mark his shooting,  
Love kept the glass that Time refused.  
And lovers ever since, computing,  
The hours with minutes have confused.





### A TRAGEDY IN RHYME

THERE was a man upon a time  
Who could not speak except in rhyme.  
He could not voice his smallest wish,  
He could not order soup or fish,  
He could not hail a passing car,  
He could not ask for a cigar, —  
And let a rhymeless sentence mar  
His speech. He could not vent despair,  
Anger, or rage — he could not *swear*,



He could not even have his say  
 On common topics of the day.  
 The dreadful cold — the awful heat,  
 The rise in coal, the fall in wheat,  
 He could not rise to give his seat  
 In crowded car to maiden sweet,  
 Or buy a paper in the street, —  
 Except in measured, rhyming feet.  
 "He must have been a man of means!  
 In this, the age of magazines!"  
 I hear you say. Ah, reader, wait  
 Till you have heard his awful fate.  
 You will not then expatiate  
 Upon his fortune. —

39





Well, one night

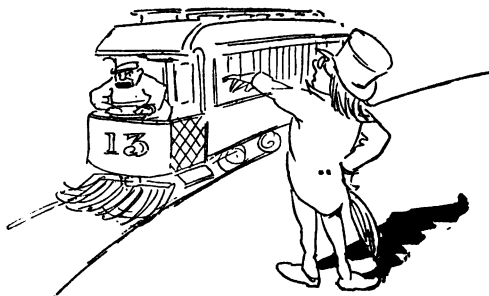
A burglar came, and at the sight,  
The rhymester took a fearful fright.  
The only avenue for flight  
Was up the chimney; here he climbed  
Until he stuck, and then he rhymed  
As follows: —

*“ Goodness gracious me !  
I’m stuck as tight as tight can be !  
Oh, dear, I’m in an awful plight.  
I cannot budge to left or right,  
Or up or down this awful chimney ! ”*  
Then he *was* stuck ; had he said “ Jimm’ny ! ”  
It would have saved him many a pang.  
But no ! he could not stoop to slang.  
In vain he writhed and racked his brain  
For rhymes to “ chimney.”

It was plain  
He *had* to rhyme — for should he cease  
He must forever hold his peace.  
He tried to shout, he tried to call.  
The truth fell on him like a pall.  
There is n't any rhyme at all  
To "chimney." —



When they searched the room  
They found it silent as a tomb.  
For years they advertised in vain  
They never heard of him again.





### A NEW-YORKER

*"Breathes there a man with soul so dead  
Who never to himself hath said,  
'This is my own my native land'?"*

WALTER SCOTT.

THE man of whom I sing was not  
Cast in the mould of Walter Scott.

Van Hatton Jones O'Rorke  
Sighs never for his native loam;  
Where'er his feet may chance to roam  
He feels about as much at home  
As in his own New York.

Says he, "No matter where I go,  
From Baffin's Bay to Borneo,  
From Kandahar to Cork;  
From pole to pole, from sea to sea —  
No matter where on earth I be —  
*Something* I find reminding me  
Of little old New York."



In Switzerland 't is his delight  
To sit upon an Alp at night,  
"Because," as he explains,  
"The avalanches I adore,  
As down the mountain side they pour.  
They call to mind the fitful roar  
Of elevated trains."





The Indian jungle, dank  
and dim,  
A fascination has for him;  
**He is not scared at all**  
To see a fearful tiger spring,  
But claps his hands like anything  
And makes the silent jungle ring  
With cheers for Tammany Hall.

In Hong Kong — in Jerusalem —  
He weeps with joy, for each of them,  
Freighted with memories sweet;



**The one with almond eyes and cues,  
So too the other with its Jews  
The recollection fond renews  
Of Mott and Baxter Street.**



On Nicaragua's riven rocks,  
Furrowed and rent by earthquake shocks,  
    He'll gaze the livelong day.  
For in their chasms deep and wide,  
With earth torn up on either side,  
He can not but recall with pride  
    His own dear old Broadway.

E'en as I write there comes to me  
A letter (dated Ashantee)

    Telling of his decease.

“ *A savage tribe,*” the letter saith,  
“ *With cruel clubs beat him to death, —*  
*Exclaiming with his latest breath,*  
    ‘ *How like our brave Police !* ’ ”





## THE PLAGIARIST

CLUSTERS of grapes on a  
lofty tree;

"Pooh!" said the Fox,  
"too sour for me!"

Just then an inspiration  
came —

On a low branch he  
placed his name.

Happening soon a Crow  
to spy,

"Nice grapes!" he cried.

"Miss, won't you buy?"

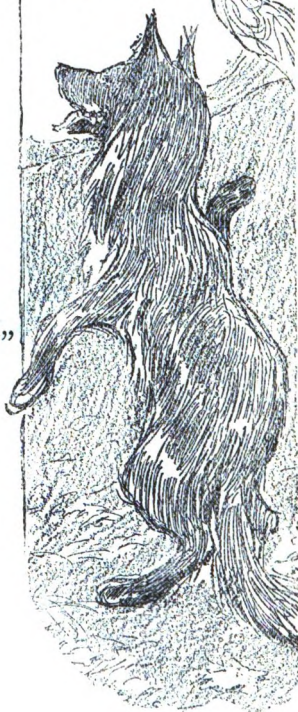
Said she, "I'll buy, and  
pay you well,

Only, first, prove they're  
yours to sell."

"No fear!" he cried,  
"behold my name!"

### MORAL

*No grapes too high for some  
to claim!*





## A BUTTERFLY GIRL

THEY tell me I  
Am like (oh, my !  
I wonder why)  
A butterfly!

*I* cannot fly!  
No wings have I.  
And butterflies  
They are not wise  
As *I*, who say  
My A B C  
(As far as K)  
Fast as can be!

I cannot see,  
How it can be,  
I cannot guess,  
Unless — unless —  
May be — why, yes!  
He, too, like me,  
Loves so to press  
His little nose  
Into a rose.

## THE MISSING LINK.

*There was chattering and jabbering and bellowing  
and growling,  
And the sound of many waters and of many  
creatures howling,  
As the voices of creation all were lifted up together  
In a universal chorus — “ Did you ever see such  
weather ? ”*

BESIDE the rail, despite the gale,  
Old Noah took each ticket,  
And registered each Beast and Bird  
That passed inside the wicket.

And when at last they had made fast  
As much as they could stow away,  
He cried “ Let go ! cut loose ! yo ho !  
Hoist gang ! avast ! heave ho — away ! ”

With heave and yank, up came the plank,  
A-straining and a-creaking,  
When, rising o’er the wind and roar,  
They heard two voices shrieking, —

“Take us aboard ! You can’t afford  
So cruelly to flout us !

We are a pair extremely rare ;  
No ark ’s complete without us .”

Down went the gang, and up there sprang  
Before them, through the curtain  
Of blinding rain, the oddest twain,  
Of genus most uncertain.

They ’d human shape, yet like the ape  
Were caudally appended ;  
And, strange to tell, their feet as well,  
Like apes’, in fingers ended.

Quoth Noah, “Pray, who are you — say?  
Human, or anthropoidal ? ”

“You takes your choice !” as with one voice  
They cried; which so annoyed all

The apes on board with one accord  
They screamed for indignation ;  
’T was very clear *they* would not hear  
Of any such relation.

Said Noah, “Though, you ’re rare, I know  
You ’re not for my collection ;  
And though not vain, I must refrain  
From claiming the connection.



With small regret, the pair he set  
On shore mid cheers and hissing,  
And that's the way it comes to-day  
The MISSING LINK is missing.

## THE STRIKE.

ONE Mr. William Thingum Tite,  
His young wife's patience sorely tried;  
She called her boy, as well she might,  
UNTIDINESS PERSONIFIED.

Whene'er he went to bed  
at night,  
He never put his things  
away,  
But tossed his clothes to  
left or right,  
And where they fell  
He let them  
stay.

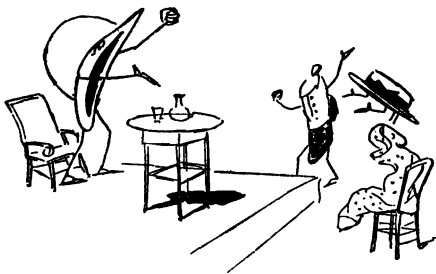


Now, worms are not the only folk  
That, when exasperated, turn.  
Clothes, too, will turn (*that's not a joke*),  
As from this narrative you'll learn.

One night, when Mr. William lay  
Wrapped in the arms of Morpheus,  
His clothes a meeting held, that they  
Their sad condition might discuss.

The Roll Call first of all was read,  
And when 't was found that all were there,  
Since he came nearest to the head,  
To Derby Hat they gave the chair.

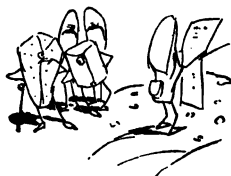




“My Fellow Garments!” he began,  
When every one at last was still,  
“Let us put down the tyrant *man*!”  
As with one voice they cried, “We *will*!”

“He calls himself Creation’s Lord,  
But were it not for me and you,  
What would he do?” With one accord  
The meeting cried, “What *could* he do?”

“How could he go to ball or hop,  
Or even walk the avenues?”  
“Why, but for us he’d have to stop  
At home, of course!” exclaimed the Shoes.



“Supposing, on the street, perhaps,  
He met a lady that he knew —  
How could he bow?” The Hats and Caps  
Shouted in unison, “That’s true!”

“How could he even offer her  
His hand in saying, ‘How d’ye do’?  
You know to whom I now refer!”  
“We do!” exclaimed the Gloves. “We do!”

“And what is more, if we were not  
Good Form,” concluded Derby Hat,  
“How ever from the common lot  
Could he be told? Now tell me that!”





A Resolution then, proposed  
By Oxford Shoe, and seconded  
By White Cravat (no one opposed),  
Was passed — and this is how it read:

*Whereas*, one William Thingum Tite,  
Has shown himself for clothes unfit,  
*Whereas*, we, Undersigned, this night  
Are painfully aware of it;

*Whereas*, said William never pays  
Us the attention that we like ;  
*Resolved*, unless he mend his ways,  
We, Undersigned, His Clothes, *will strike!*

The Resolution being framed,  
And signed and sealed that very night,  
A deputation then was named  
To wait on William Thingum Tite.

When William rose next day he wore  
A somewhat sad and thoughtful air.  
Picking his clothes from off the floor,  
He smoothed them out with greatest care.

. . . . .

You would not know young William Tite  
If now he chanced to meet your eye ;  
He is a vision of delight ;  
He keeps a valet,— that is why.



A LITTLE CHAPTER  
ON SPORT





### PIG-STICKING

Oh, see the Boar dash through the Brake!  
He knows good Sport, and no mis-take !  
Ah! now he turns and kills a Dog.  
He is a Vicious, Brutal Hog !  
He has the temper of a Rat.  
But soon they 'll give him *tit-for-tat*.  
My Child, this teaches how Unwise  
It is to let your Temper rise.



### THE FOX-HUNT

OH, Fox, you 've had a merry run.  
In all the world there's no such fun  
As over Fields and Fences free  
To chase a Sporty Fox, and be  
First at the Death. In Wood or Field  
What can more Healthy Pleasure yield  
Than this?

What say you, Curlylocks?  
Well, no! — perhaps *not*, to the Fox!



### A DEER-HUNT

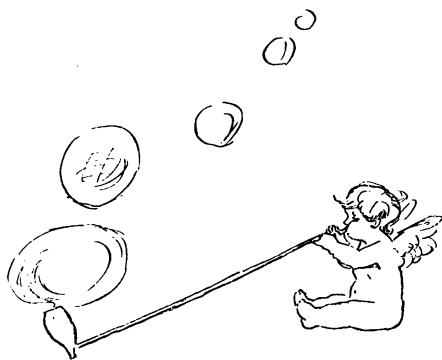
THE Hunter's Horn sounds Bright and Clear ;  
The Hunters raise a merry cheer.  
But why is Mr. Stag so Sad ?  
Sport is a thing to make one Glad.  
He seems about to shed a Tear,  
Just when the Height of Sport is near.  
If he can swim a few Strokes more,  
I fear that he will gain the Shore,  
And then, if he should get *away*,  
The Sport is Ruined for To-day.



### COURSING

THE Hare is off, he does not lag!  
He 's glad to leave the stuffy Bag,  
And play a little game of Tag.  
Will the Hare win ? Oh, not at all.  
He cannot go beyond that wall.  
Ah, *now* he 's caught ! Why does he Squeal  
So very loud ? He makes me feel  
Quite *Queer* !

The Hare, my Child, is Short  
Of Brains. He does not know it's Sport.



### **III**

## **BUBBLES**

## A PLEA

GOD made Man  
Frail as a bubble;  
God made Love,  
Love made Trouble.  
God made the Vine,  
Was it a sin  
That Man made Wine  
To drown Trouble in?

## TOAST AND WATER

HERE 's to old Adam's crystal ale,  
Clear, sparkling, and divine.  
Fair H<sub>2</sub>O, long may you flow !  
We drink your health (in wine).

## DUM VIVIMUS

YESTERDAY 's yesterday while to-day 's here,  
To-day is to-day till to-morrow appear,  
To-morrow 's to-morrow until to-day 's past,  
And kisses are kisses as long as they last.

## ON THE BRINK

IF all your beauties, one by one,  
I pledge, dear, I am thinking  
Before the tale were well begun  
I had been dead of drinking.

## TO A GIRL

HERE 's lovers two to the maiden true,  
And four to the maid caressing,  
But the wayward girl with the lips that curl  
Keeps twenty lovers guessing.



## MEMORIES

Kisses tender, kisses cold,  
Kisses timid, kisses bold,  
Kisses joyful, kisses sad,  
Pass the bowl or I 'll go mad.

## NIL DESPERANDUM

Don't die of love; in heaven above  
Or hell they 'll not endure you;  
Why look so glum when Doctor Rum  
Is waiting for to cure you?

## TO A CHAPERONE

Here 's to the chaperone,  
May she learn from Cupid  
Just enough blindness  
To be sweetly stupid.

## **TWO OUT OF TIME**



## TWO OUT OF TIME

TIME. — *A mixture of the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.*

SCENE. — *A Forest. Large tree at centre. At foot of tree remains of small picnic spread — half emptied champagne glasses, white cloth, etc., etc. Faint music whenever Shepherd speaks.*

### PERSONS :

CORYDON. — *A Shepherd of the Fifteenth Century.*

MADELEINE. — *Leading Lady of the Pinero Theatre.*

*(Sound of the Shepherd's pipe in distance and approaching.)*

*(Enter CORYDON playing on pipe. He stops playing, stretches his arms, and yawns.)*

### CORYDON.

Where can they be — my sheep ? I must have slept  
A moon at least, that they have strayed so far.  
A murrain on them ! If I had but kept,  
The while I was asleep, one eye ajar,  
I would not now be wondering where they are.

*( Yawns. )*

Alack and well-a-day ! I feel so drear  
As I had been asleep a hundred year,  
And I have such an emptiness inside



As tho' I'd eaten naught since Christmastide.  
I feel as empty as — what shall I say? —  
As a wine jug to him who hath no pay,  
Empty as empty benches at a play,  
Or as the heads of silly sheep that stray.

*(Looks about in wonder.)*

Whence came this mighty forest that I see?  
When I lay down to sleep there was no tree —

Can it have sprung up in a single night ?

*(Pauses. Then with terror.)*

God grant I be not some accursed wight  
Who lying down one night upon his bed  
Awoke to find that centuries had fled.

*(Sees sheep's skull upon ground. Picks it up.)*

Good Saints ! 'T is true — and centuries have flown.  
Of all my flock is left but this poor bone.  
Alas, poor Rameses ! I loved you well.  
How oft I've listened for your distant bell ;  
How oft I've heard your bleating on the plain.  
Alas, I ne'er shall hear you bleat again.

*(Emotion.)*

In sooth there's no more joy in life for me,  
I'll lay me down and die beneath this tree.

*(Crosses to tree. Sees picnic spread. Starts.)*

Now, by our Lady ! what may this thing be ?  
Marry, a feast !

*(Kneels down and picks up champagne glass half  
full. Tastes. Is amazed.)*

A feast for gods — the devil !

*(Drops glass.)*

Sure 't is the scene of some unholy revel  
Of elves or fairies, witches, imps of hell.

*(Tastes another glass.)*

Beshrew me, though, this witch's brew tastes well.

*(Drains glass — smacks lips.)*

Um! That was good. It hath a wondrous spell.  
I vow that though the price of it were hell,  
One soul per drink,

*(Drinks.)*

One drink per soul, methinks  
I'd pawn a score of souls for more such drinks.

*(Drinks again.)*

*(Enter Madeleine,  
dressed in modern  
shooting costume,  
gun, etc.  
Corydon starts.)*

Have mercy on us!





Angel — devil — troll —  
Or fairy — if you be ; oh, spare my soul!  
I did but touch my lips unto the bowl.

**MADELEINE.**

Get up, for Heaven's sake ! What's the matter  
with you ? Are you crazy ? You look as if you'd  
come from a museum. Who are you, anyway ?



CORYDON.

The shepherd Corydon, from yonder vale.  
Once I led sheep across a grassy dale  
Where now this forest stands,

Alack a day !

MADELEINE.

You lack a day, do you ? If what you say is true,  
you lack three hundred years, my friend ! for some  
of these trees are at least that old ! —

CORYDON.

Ah, woe is me ! — then what I feared is true !

*(Pause. Emotion.)*

And who are you, good master — who are you ?

MADELEINE.

What do you take me for ? I 'm no man, I 'm a  
lady — an actress. I 'm visiting at the hall. Read  
that if you don't believe me !

*(Pulls newspaper out of her pocket ; hands it.)*

CORYDON.

*(Looking astonished at paper ; holding it at arm's  
length, and scratching his head.)*

Nay, but I cannot read, but I should say  
The scribe who penned it took full many a day



And many a horn of ink for such a screed.  
And 't is right clerkly penn'd —  
Wilt please you, read.

**MADELEINE.**

You idiot, this is n't writing — it's printing.

**CORYDON.**

Printing — what's that ? —

**MADELEINE.**

Printing is the precious product of the press  
agent. Listen !

(*Reads.*)

"Miss Madeleine Young, of the Pinero Stock Company, is a guest at Tafton Hall, for Lady Scamperwell's garden party."

(*Stiffly.*)

I am the actress.

CORYDON.

An actress — what's that?

MADELEINE.

An actress — a player.

CORYDON.

Good saints! A mummer! Prithee, what d'ye  
play —

A naughty queen, or an enchantress gay,  
Or a pale princess fleeing for her life,  
Or play you abbess — or the doctor's wife?

MADELEINE.

I am the leading lady.

CORYDON.

The leading lady! Sakes! What may you lead?  
Say, lady, what thrice happy flock is thine? —  
A herd of sheep, mayhap, or geese, or swine.

MADELEINE.

*(Very deliberately.)*

Well—not exactly, and yet— But no! of course not—I mean I play the leading parts—and keep the centre of the stage from every one else.

*(Pushing him off.)*

CORYDON.

Oh, Marry! Now I see, you wed the prince  
Who saved you from the duke, who slew the queen  
Who poisoned her stepfather, who seduced—

MADELEINE.

Nothing of the kind. We don't do any of those stupid things nowadays. Besides, it's comedy, not tragedy.

CORYDON.

Ah, then you play a pretty shepherd maid  
Who loves the shepherd and the bailiff's son,  
And weds one of them when the play is done!

MADELEINE.

She'd be more likely to wed them both in our kind of play.

*(Corydon makes gesture of horror.)*

CORYDON.

Perchance you play a shrew who beats her lord,  
Who steals a kid, and feigns that he be daft,  
And saving him from hanging, by your craft,  
Live happy ever after.

MADELEINE.

Oh, stuff! All that's changed in our plays.  
The leading lady is married in the first act, and  
falls out of love at first sight in the second act,  
and in the third act is divorced and lives happy  
ever after.

CORYDON.

Divorced! What's that?

MADELEINE.

That is the state of bliss every lady who truly  
and sincerely hates her lord aspires to attain.

CORYDON.

Call you that comedy? It likes me not.  
Where does the play come in — what do they plot?

MADELEINE.

The plot! Oh, we're past all that sort of thing.  
They don't do anything in the play — that's much  
too simple. In the first act they talk about what

they did before the play began. In the second act they read telegrams from people who are doing things elsewhere — and in the last act —

CORYDON.

I' faith, but I must be a stupid lout,  
For I can't see what's left to talk about.

MADELEINE.

Why, in the last act they talk about what they're going to do when the play is over.

CORYDON.

Sure this must be the Age of Talk — but, pray,  
What precious talk is this, that folks will pay  
To hear it ?

MADELEINE.

Oh, for that matter, it does n't cut any ice if they say nothing at all, as long as they say it cleverly.

CORYDON.

I hate your prating plays. Once I did play  
A little part myself in a real play —  
'T would crack no ice for you, though, as you say.

MADELEINE.

*(Laughing and mocking him — bowing very low.)*  
Marry! What play'd you, sir — what might it be ?

CORYDON.

A mystery play — of the Nativity.

MADELEINE.

Who played the star part ?

CORYDON.

*(Reprovingly.)*

Nay, do not jest, good lady, e'en in fun,  
I played Third Shepherd in the place of one  
That was too full of sack his lines to spell.  
They picked me out because I play so well!

*(Proudly.)*

MADELEINE.

So you were his understudy ?

CORYDON.

I know not what you mean, but this I know.  
They told me if a-mumming I would go,  
And con for years my lines till they went pat,  
I'd rise to be First Shepherd.

MADELEINE.

*(With mock enthusiasm.)*

Think of that! Dear me! How could you  
refuse such a brilliant offer ?

CORYDON.

'Tis a long story, and as dull to thee  
As any nineteenth-century play to me.

MADELEINE.

Or one of your stuffy old mystery plays to me,  
for that matter.

*(Looking at her watch.)*

Great Heavens! It's four o'clock. We give a performance this afternoon at Lady Scamperwell's garden party on the lawn at five o'clock, and I've just time to get over and dress. I'm quite charmed to have met you. It is really wonderful — I can scarcely believe you are real — by the way, perhaps you'd like to see the play?

*(Takes card out of her porte-monnaie and writes.)*

Present this card at the lodge. The villagers will all be there, and you may meet some of your descendants — and you will see a play after your own heart!

CORYDON.

Right gladly will I go — tho' I be shamed  
Of my torn frock. What may the play be named?



MADELEINE.

We are going to do "As You Like It," by William Shakespeare.

(*With a flourish.*)

Be sure and come. Good-bye!

(*Exit Madeleine.*)

CORYDON.

(*Thoughtfully.*)

By William Shakespeare, who may he be? Nay,

'T is like enough some mawkish modern play.

There was no William Shakespeare (*sceptically*)  
in my day.

The play is "As I Like It." Says she so?

By all the saints how doth the lady know? (*Mus-  
ingly.*)

Marry! I'll go, in sooth, that I may wot

If she speaks true. (*With a shrug.*)

Mayhap, I'll like it not! (*Exit.*)

## **CURTAIN CALLS**

**THE EXPLANATION**  
**THE WANDERING JEW**  
**HORACE**  
**JONAH**  
**LADY MACBETH**  
**GODIVA**  
**DESDEMONA**  
**EVE**  
**CLEOPATRA**

## THE EXPLANATION

I DREAMED I cast a Pebble in a Pond  
That stretched to the Horizon and Beyond,  
Making a Ripple that my Fancy took  
To be the Circulation of my Book.  
And as the Circle wide and wider spread,  
It passed the Limit of Things Limited,  
Until the Ripple from my Pebble cast  
Had waxed a Mighty Wave, that swelling fast  
Broke presently, and Overflowed the Past;  
And Then I dreamed came to me shoals on shoals  
Of Complimentary Letters from Great Souls,  
Praising my Book. — Of These a Choice Selection,  
Reader, I now present for your Inspection.



### THE WANDERING JEW

No Living Soul can testify  
With such authority as I  
Upon the Weariness and Ache  
Of Walking just for Walking's sake;  
But ever since I undertook  
To be the Agent of your Book,  
And travelled for the sake of Trade,  
I've felt like quite a different Shade.  
Indeed, I have at last begun  
To wish my journey never done;

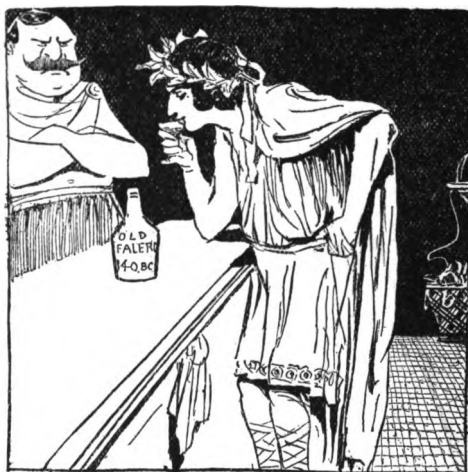
Both for your good Book's sake and mine;  
Love and Percent. I thus combine —  
And that reminds me —

I enclose

My statement for the month, which shows  
The net subscriptions up to date  
(With Discount at the usual rate).  
Among subscribers you'll perceive  
The names of Cleopatra, Eve,  
Lady Godiva, Horace, Jonah,  
Lady Macbeth and Desdemona.  
They all send testimonials too,  
More later — until then, adieu.

P.S.

I have (I trust with your consent)  
Deducted sixty-five per cent.



## HORACE

“HERE ’s to you!” as you moderns say when  
drinking,  
And ’t is a vast improvement, to *my* thinking,  
On spilling precious liquor on the sod,  
For fear of angering some thirsty god.  
Here ’s to your Book — It cannot fail to bring  
Pleasure to such as like that kind of thing;

Fairies and Flowers, Curlycues and quirls.  
For my part, though (don't think me Pig mid  
    Pearls),  
To tell the truth, I rather miss the girls.  
*De gustibus . . . !*  
    Leastways the Cover's showy,  
I think I'll pass my copy on to Chloe.





## JONAH

### EN ROUTE

It is the Third Day Out — or (if you pin  
Me strictly to the Truth) the Third Day *In*.  
All day the Sea tempestuous has wrought,  
And yet I don't feel lonesome as I ought,  
When I consider that I am the one  
And only passenger aboard, with none  
To tell me Stories older than the Sun,

Or make me wagers on the Daily Run,  
Or, if exclusively inclined, to shun.  
It happened thiswise: once I took a ship  
For Tarshish, and, to read upon the Trip,  
Had brought your Little Book of Garden Lore,  
Upon the which I set exceeding store.  
Now as I read, lost in a happy dream,  
There waxed a sea that smote upon our beam  
With such a smite that every one was floored;  
My precious Little Book went Overboard,  
And I leaped after, of my own accord.

. . . . .  
I saved my Book, and rose in time to hail  
This very opportunely passing Whale,  
Within whose dim Cetacean Saloon  
I find my solitude a Precious Boon;  
For as I read your "*Garden*" o'er and o'er,  
I care not if I *never* reach the Shore.



## LADY MACBETH

SINCE 't is by every one agreed,  
To say that *He who runs may read* ;  
Then *she who walks*, though with less haste,  
The joys of Literature may taste.  
So I who pace this spectral floor,  
Doing my perpetual encore  
Of Life's Performance o'er and o'er,  
In moments spare, however brief,  
Turn to your "*Garden* " for relief

From gore and ghosts with fearful eyes,—  
To Cupids, Bees, and Butterflies,  
And Roses, who revive in me  
The Hope that some day I may be  
By their exotic exorcism,  
Quite cured of my somnambulism.



## GODIVA

**"I WAITED for the Train at Coventry,"  
The Train was several hundred years too late  
(It had not been invented yet, you see);  
Such is the Cold Cast Irony of Fate.  
At last the Train arrived, and with it too  
Your Book—a Precious Package marked "collect."  
Raptured I read it through and through, and  
through,  
And then I paused in sadness to reflect —**

How that same Book had been a priceless boon,  
But for a little accident of Date;  
If only I had not been born so soon,  
Or if *you* had not gone to press so late.  
O Book, if only you had come to me  
Ere I rode forth upon that morning sad !  
In naught but Faith and Hope and Charity,  
And other Vague Abstractions thinly clad ;  
In whole Editions I would have invested  
(I hope you get good Royalties therefrom),  
To keep the naughty townfolk interested,  
And most Particularly, Peeping Tom.



## DESDEMONA

DEAR Mr. Author, I make bold  
To send you greeting, as an old  
Admirer from beyond the Styx.  
I *love* your book! (I ordered *Six*!)  
Will you believe me when I write  
Your verses saved my life this night?  
'T was thus (but first I ought to say,  
In Hades we enact each day

Life's Tragedy, as in a Play  
That has no ending) : well, to-day,  
When we came to the final act,  
I introduced with cunning tact  
Some extracts from your charming Book.  
I wish you 'd seen Othello's look  
Grow soft — and when he came to do  
The Deed — lo, he forgot his Cue,  
Ending the scene, oh, bliss of blisses,  
By smothering me instead with kisses!





## EVE

O DEAR! I cannot choose but write  
To tell you of the Pure Delight  
Your Little Book has given me.  
While reading it I seem to be  
Transported in your Fancy's train,  
To my own Garden once again.  
Ah me! whenever I recall  
That Fatal Morning of the Fall,

Of One Thing quite convinced I am;  
Had I that day, as Old Khayyám,  
A Book of Verses 'neath the Bough,  
I 'd be in Paradise e'en now.  
With your Sweet Book to entertain,  
The Serpent might have talked in vain ;  
For is not Curiosity  
The naughty Daughter of Ennui?  
. . . . .  
Yet, but for *my* bite into the Unknown,  
Meseems *your* "Garden " never could have grown.



## CLEOPATRA

*How sharper than a Serpent's tooth  
It is to have a Thankless child.*

WHO wrote those lines, I wonder; was it you?  
For if it was, you know a Thing or Two  
About a Serpent. No, I must decline  
Discussing children, they're not in my line;

As for the Serpent, I'll vouch for the truth  
Of all you say about a Serpent's Tooth.  
I've felt his Fang, I know its deadly smart;  
Also I know your Little Book by Heart;  
And so I pray this offspring of your Brain  
May be a Thankful Child, and bring much gain.

*Some take their gold  
In minted mold,  
And some in Harps hereafter ;  
But give me mine  
In Tresses fine,  
And keep the change in Laughter.*













